

Hospital Proposed

Establishment of a new unit of the Emergency Hospital, at a site to be selected, also was proposed, as well as reorganization of the Health Department's building arrangements.

The improvement program was formulated with aid of University of California public health professors.—San Francisco *Examiner*, March 2, 1938.

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Rabies in California

During the past fifteen years, 1922 to 1937, 12,926 cases of rabies in animals have been reported to the California State Department of Public Health. Their distribution, by animals, is as follows:

Dogs	12,105	Mules	10
Cats	256	Foxes	2
Cows	319	Monkeys	2
Horses	30	Rat	1
Coyotes	25	Squirrel	1
Goats	43	Raccoons	2
Hogs	12	Rabbits	2
Sheep	92	Unknown	19
Skunks	5		
			12,926

The distribution of these 12,926 cases of rabies in animals, by counties, is as follows:

Alameda	125	Plumas	38
Amador	2	Riverside	108
Butte	1	Sacramento	83
Calaveras	3	San Benito	24
Contra Costa	37	San Bernardino	277
El Dorado	6	San Diego	643
Fresno	226	San Francisco	5
Humboldt	11	San Joaquin	253
Imperial	244	San Luis Obispo	10
Inyo	6	San Mateo	11
Kern	92	Santa Barbara	20
Kings	101	Santa Clara	40
Lake	1	Santa Cruz	20
Lassen	30	Shasta	7
Los Angeles	9,377	Siskiyou	14
Madera	84	Solano	12
Marin	76	Sonoma	2
Mariposa	1	Stanislaus	193
Merced	54	Tehama	1
Modoc	95	Tulare	150
Mono	1	Tuolumne	2
Monterey	124	Ventura	35
Napa	7	Yolo	14
Nevada	7	Yuba	5
Orange	234	California *	2
Placer	12		
			12,926

* Dog brought into California from Denver, Colorado. Raccoon brought to Imperial County from Mexico.

NOTE.—Only those counties that have reported cases are listed.

Human Cases

Since 1899, when rabies first appeared in California, eighty-six human beings have died of this disease. Of these, thirty had received the Pasteur treatment for the prevention of rabies. It must be remembered that this is a fatal disease, and that no one who has once shown symptoms of rabies has ever recovered. It is 100 per cent fatal.

The Pasteur treatment, in order to be effective, depends upon several factors, such as prompt administration following bite of an infected animal and location of bite, those near the larger nerve centers being much more serious. Cauterization of the wound with fuming nitric acid, which is the only reliable cauterizing agent, is also of prime importance in preventing the development of rabies.

Of the thirty fatal cases in which the Pasteur treatment was given, thirteen had received no cautery. In nine cases wounds were cauterized with nitric acid, four with iodine, two with carbolic acid, one with argyrol and one with silver nitrate. The records show that in only nine out of thirty cases were wounds cauterized with nitric acid. Of the remaining fifty-six cases out of the total that have occurred since 1899, only five had received cauterization with nitric acid.

Since the location of the wound is of great importance in rabies, it is interesting to note that in these thirty decedents, sixteen had been bitten on the head and face, seven on the hands, one on the wrist and face, two on the arm or wrist, one on the legs, one on the foot and wrist and in two cases the location of the bite was not recorded.

In three cases treatment was started the same day that the patient was bitten and in ten cases treatment was started five or more days after having been bitten.

Regardless of the location of the wound, 76 per cent of these cases, for which the incubation period is known, had incubation periods of sixty days or less. In no case was the incubation period less than ten days. In only three cases did it extend over a period longer than six months.

While the Pasteur treatment is ineffective in a small proportion of cases, particularly those involving severe bites about the head, face and arms, it is generally effective, and under improved methods of administration far better results are obtained now than were possible when the method was in its infancy. In the Pasteur L'Institut, Paris, where more than 500 patients receive the treatment each year, a fatality seldom occurs. In those cases where the lacerations occur on the head and face the infection sometimes develops more rapidly than immunity can develop through the Pasteur treatment.—*Weekly Bulletin, California Department of Public Health*, March 5, 1938.

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Dog Bite Victim Dying, Report of Health Officer

Bitten by a cocker spaniel dog a month ago, according to health authorities, Rufus Bradley, 141 North Grand Avenue, was reported dying at General Hospital today from rabies, according to Dr. George Parrish, city health officer.

Bradley was one of nine persons the dog reportedly attacked when he ran from his home in Glendale to downtown Los Angeles.

Seven of the nine reported to the Health Department for Pasteur treatments, Parrish said, and they are now recovering. Stephen Wilson, who failed to take the Pasteur treatments, died several days ago. Bradley also had failed to take Pasteur treatments.—*Los Angeles Herald-Express*, March 24, 1938.

LETTERS

Concerning the Los Angeles County Hospital.

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Chicago, March 16, 1938.

To the Editor:—I wanted to see you while in Los Angeles several days ago, but my time was taken up with two or three meetings which I had to attend and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to discuss with you the Los Angeles County Hospital situation. . . .

Since receiving the Los Angeles County Hospital material you sent to me, I have reviewed it very carefully, and I am convinced that you worked up an excellent case which will surely have effect in changing the unfortunate policy which the Board of Supervisors have adopted in connection with the County Hospital.

I hope the time is not too far distant when the plan and set-up followed in Alameda County will be adopted in Los Angeles County. There is no question whatsoever but that the Alameda County plan is the best one under which any county hospital can be run. . . .

The county hospitals certainly should be kept exclusively for indigent cases and not for patients who are able to pay their way. . . . It is highly unfair to the taxpayer and to the physician to open the county hospitals to all people, regardless of their financial status, and I am sure that you will get lots of support in the investigation of the situation which you are now endeavoring to expose. Your premises are exceedingly well taken.

Rest assured of my deep interest in this matter and desire to give you any personal support I can in the issues mentioned in your letter and the material which you so kindly sent me.

Very sincerely yours,

MALCOLM T. MACEachern, M.D.,

Associate Director.

Concerning rabies quarantine in Ventura County.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Modification of order issued December 8, 1937, declaring a quarantine against all dogs and cats within the boundaries of the county of Ventura.

To the Editor:—Having received from Charles R. Wylie, M.D., Health Officer of Ventura County, a request for the modification of the order issued December 8, 1937, declaring a quarantine against all dogs and cats within the boundaries of the county of Ventura, the California State Board of Public Health having made an investigation in accordance with the provisions of Section 2, Chapter 369, Statutes